

# Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council

## Minutes of Regular Meeting

December 9, 2020

Google Meet

### Present:

Steve Michael, Chair, Department of Human Rights, for San Wong  
Wendy Greenman, Iowa Workforce Development  
Julie Hibben, Iowa Department of Public Health  
Will Keck, Chair, State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council  
Gary Niles, Juvenile Court Services, 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District  
Jay Pennington, Iowa Department of Education  
Makayla Rodgers, Iowa Economic Development  
Shanell Wagler, Early Childhood Iowa  
Laura Leise, Iowa Department of Human Services

### Others Present:

Volta Adovor, Iowa Youth Congress  
Amaris Albers, AMP  
Lisa Bender, Iowa Department of Human Services  
Mary Greene, Iowa Department of Public Health  
Abby King, Iowa Youth Congress  
Brienne Messer, CJP/AmeriCorps, Coordinator, Iowa Youth Congress  
Tiara Mosely, CJP/AmeriCorps, Coordinator, State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council  
Jill Padgett, CJP, Juvenile Justice Expert  
Tina Palmer, Iowa Department of Public Health  
Kayla Powell, CJP, NYTD/Youth Development Coordinator  
Julie Rinker, CJP, Administrative Secretary  
Kylie Spies, CJP/AmeriCorps, Youth Leadership Coordinator  
Karla Wildberger

## I. Introductions and Announcements

Steve Michael welcomed all in attendance at 2:02 p.m. A quorum was present. Introductions were made. Some agenda items were rearranged to accommodate schedules.

## II. Approval of the Minutes from September 23, 2020 ICYD meeting

Susan Walkup moved to approve the September meeting minutes, seconded by Shanell Wagler. The motion was unanimously approved.

## III. State of Iowa Youth Advisory Committee (SIYAC) Update

Will Keck reported that the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter meeting was held in November and legislative priorities were identified: Advancing Gender Equity, Automatic Voter Registration, Education Equity; Sanctuary Cities, and Sustainability Course. Members will contact legislators to share information, some meetings are scheduled next week.



iowacollaboration  
foryouthdevelopment

He also noted the following:

- Monthly updates will be provided to ICYD members by SIYAC, Iowa Youth Congress (IYC), and Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP).
- Community partners are being developed. SIYAC meetings will include presentations from a variety of organizations and agencies. The Office of the Secretary of State has provided information. Keck may be contacting ICYD members.
- SIYAC members continue to work on individual and group service projects.
- Keck is developing a report for the next meeting which will provide details on where SIYAC has been over the past four years as well as future plans.
- Once Youth Action Squads are completed, town halls between IYC and SIYAC will be held and ICYD members will be invited. This will be an opportunity for youth to share concerns and provide input. A summary will be provided after the events.
- Keck is working with Abby King and Volta Adovor (IYC) regarding a webinar sponsored by the Department of Education on February 4. The webinar will focus on 'adulthood' in the education system and creating supportive relationships between students and teachers.

Michael asked members to comment on the legislative priorities established by SIYAC and IYC, specifically Education Equity and Gender Equity.

Keck responded that Education Equity focuses on creating a more equitable experience for all students through professional development of educators and incorporating an historically accurate and diverse curriculum and perspectives. Advancing Gender Equity focuses on gender and intersex rights and women hygiene products in schools.

Pennington asked if professional development incorporates cultural sensitivity training? What would need to happen to be successful?

Keck responded that the positions were broad to incorporate other bills in the legislature. Education equity and professional development are detailed in the drafts and include establishing requirements for diversity and equity training prior to the start of the school year. Conversations were held with Iowa City and Des Moines schools on how to better teach and represent diversity and how to expand statewide.

Pennington noted that a student member is seated on the State Board of Education and suggested these concerns be shared with them. Keck reported that they have been in contact and offered to share more details with Pennington regarding the position paper.

#### **IV. Iowa Youth Congress Update**

Adovar reported that following the virtual Mock Congress in October, four committees were seated to finalize position statements and contact legislators for support. A 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter meeting was held in December to discuss progress. The committees encompass education, environment, election, and human rights.



- Education—focuses on younger students and the development of a more culturally diverse and inclusive history curriculum to create a more acceptive society in Iowa. Also working to promote equality in sex education to include LGBTQ+, sexual orientation, gender identities, and change the definition of human sexuality in Iowa Code to revoke abstinence only teaching that includes a broader curriculum: contraceptives, teen pregnancy, sexual harassment, and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Environment—wants to implement a five-cent plastic bag tax to reduce environmental degradation and fund environmental programs.
- Elections—focuses on congressional districting to delegate electoral votes more proportionately and split votes to better represent voting districts.
- Human Rights—would ban gay panic defense legal strategy to bring equality and ensure safety for all Iowans.

### **Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP) Update**

Amaris Albers reported that AMP hopes to release their legislative agenda on January 1 and is planning an annual conference. AMP is comprised of approximately 300 current and former foster care youth.

Kayla Powell explained the “Talking Wall” project posted at several residential facilities which provides an opportunity for youth to post suggestions and concerns. Four additional facilities were added. Over 300 youth from more than 45 organizations have participated and more than 1,000 notes have been received. She is working to categorize concerns and suggestions to identify themes. The information will assist AMP in developing a legislative agenda and will be shared with various councils and respective agencies. In six months, youth participants will receive outcome information on what changes are taking place or have been implemented.

Tiara Mosley reported that AMP is currently developing an alumni council for youth over 21. A meeting was held yesterday to obtain ideas.

## **V. Youth Action Squads**

### **a. Racial Justice**

### **b. COVID-19**

Michael reported that two Youth Action Squads (YAS) have been developed to focus on racial justice and COVID-19. Members meet weekly and serve two, 10-week terms. Discussions are facilitated with DHR curriculum developed by Kylie Spies and Powell.

Abby King reported that funds from the Forum for Youth Investment were provided to create two squads comprised of youth aged 14-24. Over 100 applications were received; 50 were selected. The curriculum promotes: advocacy using a racial lens, understanding the use of data to inform actions, and how to develop an action plan to implement public policy changes.



Spies added that information will be provided on research methods, skill building to interface with community leaders, how to build community partnerships, and how to get your voice heard. The program gives them an opportunity to work in their home communities. Members receive a stipend as an incentive to complete the program.

Michael asked Wagler if she would be interested in presenting issues of families with young children. Wagler noted teen parenting and was willing to help and share ideas.

## **VI. Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG)**

### **a. What Now? - Plan**

Michael wants to engage youth in policy decisions and promote ways that state agencies learn from them and move forward with their ideas. Over the past several years, the goal was to achieve a 95% graduation rate. While the rate has increased to 91.6%, minority and disabled youth are not doing as well as their white counterparts. He wants to find ways to make a difference in each population area.

He would like to hold a special ICYD meeting with members and decision makers to identify a BHAG and plan. While it may take more than one meeting to accomplish, he wants decision makers to be involved and asked members to contact supervisors and advise that he will be contacting them. Following that meeting, members will move forward in the direction(s) identified. He would like to involve SIYAC, IYC, YAS, and Powell who was hired as Youth Development Coordinator. He asked for thoughts.

Mary Greene reported that the Bureau of Family Health have been striving for a youth-adult partnership framework. However, with limited staff and funds, it will take a state-level approach to provide resources. She would be supportive of these efforts.

Pennington reported that the Department of Education is conducting a series of relevant webinars. The next one is student experiences on equity, social justice, and inclusion. He provided a web link. Michael noted that Keck and others will be part of that webinar in February. Walkup noted that nine high school students serve on the State Board of Education Equity Committee. She will connect with Powell and share the information.

## **VII. Other Business – Agency Updates**

Education—Pennington reported that the Department has been busy working to support schools regarding closures/remote learning, safety, engagement, and attendance with regard to the pandemic. CARES Act funds have been distributed to families and students to obtain remote access for learning. This coordination will continue through June until vaccinations are available to the general public.

Early Childhood—Wagler reported that home visits are held virtually. They are working to provide support to childcare providers to remain open. Federal CARES Act funds have been spent. Legislatively, they are hosting a webinar for policy makers on ‘what’s happening in early childhood’. The focus will be on needs, integrated data



(population/diversity), family support programs, childcare, mental health, and strategies that promote a more diverse workforce.

**Workforce**—Wendy Greenman reported that Iowa Workforce Development is focusing on unemployment and an unprecedented number of claims due to the pandemic and how to assist individuals obtain employment skills and training. A \$1.6 million Department of Labor grant was awarded to address needs due to COVID-19. Applications were sent to local workforce agencies and the funds will soon be awarded to address needs in the community.

**Human Services**—Lisa Bender reported that per Families First Prevention Services Act (FF) requirements, DHS began implementing evidence-based family services on July 1. This includes kinship placements to reduce family removals. Due to the pandemic, allegations of abuse were down 30-40% compared to prior years. There has been some discussions to merge DHS and DPH. An RFP would hire consultants to identify steps and requirements to merge the two agencies.

**Juvenile Court Services**—Gary Niles reported that FF implementation will begin January 11. Staff have conducted an enormous amount of work to pivot the system to meet requirements—policy development, working with DHS on the development of a five-year plan, and approval from the Children’s Bureau. Niles provided an overview of FF requirements.

## **VIII. Racial Disparities in Juvenile Justice Report – Discussion**

Michael provided an overview of the report and its recommendations. The report was shared with the Governor and legislative leadership. It will require collaboration amongst all three branches of government to implement services and steps necessary to achieve the recommendations.

## **IX. Adjourn – Next meeting – Wednesday, March 24, 2:00 – 4:00pm.**

Michael thanked members for attending. The meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Rinker  
Administrative Secretary  
Div. of Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning  
Iowa Department of Human Rights

